

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

MORI C03317935

~~TOP SECRET~~ SENSITIVE 021035Z JUL 72 [REDACTED] (BUNKER)

25X1

FROM: GENERAL HAIG SAIGON 0107 IMMEDIATE

TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER

I SPENT THE DAY IN MR I ALONG WITH NEGROPONTE, KRAEMER AND BROWN. WE ARRIVED IN HUE IN THE MIDST OF SOME EXCITEMENT AS A RESULT OF EARLY AM 130MM SHELLING OF NW OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY. THE ATTACK BY FIRE WAS BRIEF KILLING ABOUT 8 CIVILIANS BUT NOT IN MY VIEW OF ANY GREAT SIGNIFICANCE. IT WAS PROBABLY LAUNCHED IN AN EFFORT TO INFLUENCE THE QUANG TRI OFFENSIVE.

I MET IN SUCCESSION WITH GENERAL TRUONG CG MR I, GEN LAM MARINE DIVISION CG, GENERAL DONG AIRBORNE CG, GEN PHU 1ST DIVISION CG AND GENERAL THI 2ND DIVISION CG. ALL EXCEPT THE LATTER WERE CONFIDENT AND NOT PARTICULARLY APPREHENSIVE OF ENEMY CAPABILITIES. THE MARINES WERE CONVINCED THAT THEY COULD MOVE TO THE DMZ RAPIDLY AND WITH EASE. THE AIRBORNE DIVISION CG WAS ALTHOUGH CONFIDENT THOUGH PROPERLY CONCERNED WITH HIS LEFT FLANK. HE TOOK ME ASIDE AND ASKED IF FOR POLITICAL REASONS HE SHOULD PRESS TO TAKE QUANG TRI BECAUSE IF SO HE COULD DO SO IN TWO OR THREE DAYS. I TOLD HIM YES BUT ONLY IF THE MOVE WERE

STRATEGICALLY SOUND CONSIDERING THE THREAT TO HIS FLANK. IN THIS REGARD IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE WEAPONS BEING CAPTURED IN THE DRIVE ARE IN THE RATIO OF ONE TO ONE BETWEEN CREW SERVED AND INDIVIDUAL WEAPONS. THIS WOULD TEND TO SUGGEST THAT THE ENEMY IS SHORT OF INFANTRY AND HAS ESTABLISHED A FACADE FORCE OF ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY AND TANKS. IT IS ALSO INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT FOR THE MOST PART THE ENEMY BEING ENCOUNTERED IS NOT FIGHTING BUT ABANDONING HIS WEAPONS AND EVEN SOME TANKS. THE AIRBORNE DIVISION IS HOWEVER GETTING SOME PRESSURE FROM ITS LEFT FLANK. THIS AM THE AIRBORNE HAD A SHARP CONTACT FROM TANKS AND INFANTRY IN WHICH OVER 100 ENEMY WERE KILLED AND SEVEN WERE CAPTURED.

MY OWN ASSESSMENT ADMITTEDLY BASED UPON THE MOST LIMITED KNOWLEDGE IS THAT THE OFFENSIVE SHOULD CONTINUE UNTIL QUANG TRI IS LIBERATED. ALL THE COMMANDERS I SPOKE TO WERE CONFIDENT THAT THE ENEMY WAS MUCH WEAKER THAN HE HAD BEEN. ALL CLEARLY EMPHASIZED A SHARP DROP IN ENEMY MORALE, TRAINING AND COMPETENCE. CONVERSELY, ALL ARVN UNITS WERE STRONGER TODAY THAN DURING EARLIER PHASES OF THE ENEMY OFFENSIVE.

I WAS IMPRESSED AND PLEASED TO SEE HOW GEN TRUONG HAS IMPROVED FIRE COORDINATION IN MR I. HE HAS ESTABLISHED A DIRECTION CENTER WHICH INCLUDES ALL NAVY, AIR AND ARTILLERY - US AND GVN IN ONE CONTROL SITE. THIS SYSTEM COMBINED WITH SOPHISTICATED SHELL

REPORTING AND SENSOR TECHNIQUES HAS GREATLY IMPROVED ARVN'S ABILITY TO LOCATE AND DESTROY ENEMY ARTILLERY.

MY DISCUSSIONS WITH GENERAL PHU, NOW CHARGED WITH THE DEFENSE OF HUE AS THE AIRBORNE AND MARINES MOVE NORTH, HAVE ADDED TO THE IMPRESSION THAT THE ENEMY IS NO LONGER CAPABLE OF TAKING HUE EVEN WITH THE THINNING OF FRIENDLY FORCES WHICH HAS RESULTED FROM THE OFFENSIVE. PHU'S DIVISION IS NEVERTHELESS TIRED HAVING BEEN IN CONTACT SINCE EARLY MARCH.

ALL OF THE ARVN COMMANDERS SEEMED VERY APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR A CEASE FIRE. ALL REFLECTED SOME MIXED FEELINGS -- FEAR THAT A BAD DEAL MIGHT BE IMPOSED ON THEM BUT OBVIOUSLY ANXIOUS TO PERCEIVE A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL. ALL WERE DELIGHTED AND IMPRESSED WITH US ACTIONS AGAINST THE NORTH. TRUONG AND LAM MENTIONED THAT BEFORE TOO LONG THEY COULD AND SHOULD ATTACK NORTH OF THE DMZ IF NECESSARY.

GENERAL PHU STATED THAT HE BELIEVED THE ENEMY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RETURN IN EQUIVALENT STRENGTH FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS IF WE CONTINUE TO PUNISH HIM FOR A FEW MORE MONTHS.

I SPOKE TO VOGT EARLY THIS AM PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FOR MR I. HE IS FULLY APPRISED OF YOUR THINKING ON BOMBING AND WILL COMPLY.

GENERAL WEYAND IS ALSO WELL AWARE OF HOW THINGS ARE DONE IN DC AND OF THE NEED TO USE THE SPECIAL CHANNEL THROUGH BUNKER WHENEVER DOUBTS EXIST.

I AM PROCEEDING NOW TO PHNOM PENH AND WILL SEE LON NOL IN AM AND THIEU TOMORROW AFTERNOON. I WILL HAVE DINNER WITH BUNKER TOMORROW NIGHT AND DEPART SAIGON AT 10:00 PM LOCAL FOR EL TORO VIA CINCPAC. WARM REGARDS.